



PEER SUPPORT TEAM

FC No.: 222

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I. Policy

The Peer Support Team (PST) is a group consisting of sworn and civilian employees who have been trained in crisis intervention. The team is under the direction and supervision of the Stress Management Division (SMD). PST members are committed to the principles of confidentiality and integrity while providing peer support to both sworn and civilian employees of the police department. The department respects the privacy of communications occurring during Peer Support interventions. Team members will be bound to the same standards of confidentiality that apply to the SMD. The ultimate decision to use the support services of PST is a personal choice to be made by the affected employee.

II. Definitions

- A. PST Director: The Director of the SMD.
- B. Team Coordinator: Assists in the scheduling of the PST and maintains the team records.
- C. Police Psychologists: Psychologists who are part of SMD and who share a rotating on-call schedule.
- D. Confidentiality: A standard of maintaining the privacy of communications which involves not revealing information gained during Peer Support interventions, and which follows state laws and ethical standards of the American Psychological Association.

III. Activation of the PST

The PST will only be activated upon the notification of, and with the approval of, the Director, PST, or designated on-call psychologist. The senior ranking officer (SRO) on the scene will evaluate the need for PST involvement and, when appropriate, request PST

activation by contacting ECC. Individuals in need of personal assistance may also request PST involvement by contacting the Director, PST, or designee, directly. (CALEA 22.2.5)

IV. Circumstances for PST Activation

The SRO will request PST activation in the following circumstances:

- 1. When a department member witnesses the death or serious injury of any person. This includes but is not limited to:
 - a. Death or serious injury of a department employee. (CALEA 22.2.6)
 - b. Police negotiations terminating in death or serious injury to any person.
 - c. Communications personnel directly involved in call taking or dispatching.
- 2. Incidents involving death or serious physical/emotional trauma to a child.
- 3. In those situations involving department personnel which by their nature would have a severe adverse affect. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - a. The sudden, unexpected, and/or violent death of a family member.
 - b. The discovery of a life-threatening illness.

V. Responsibilities of On-Scene SRO

- A. The SRO will ensure that the scene is under control and that the situation is stabilized.
- B. The SRO will gather information as to what occurred and identify sworn and civilian personnel who may be affected.
- C. The SRO will consider requesting a PST response in any situation not enumerated above which may have an adverse impact on affected personnel. An immediate response may or may not be required. Examples of these could include situations involving abuse of a child or the death of a person resulting from non-police related activity (e.g., fatal collisions, homicides, etc.).
- D. Once a decision is made to activate PST, the request will be made through ECC. If possible, a phone number will be provided where the SRO can be reached.
- E. The SRO will gather the following:
 - 1. Name(s) of employee(s) affected.

2. Observed physiological or emotional reactions.
3. Information which may help PST members effectively assist the affected employee(s).
4. Location of affected employee(s).

F. PST activation/response may be delayed in those situations that are stable but ongoing (e.g., hostage/barricade situations).

VI. ECC Responsibilities

- A. ECC will contact the Director, PST, or designee, when the on-scene SRO requests activation of the PST.
- B. ECC will advise the Director/designee of the following information:
1. Location and nature of the incident.
 2. Name of requestor, affected personnel, and contact phone number.
 3. If any ECC personnel may be affected.
- C. ECC will notify the district commander or Car 10 of the PST request.
- D. ECC will provide copies of incident tapes upon the request of the Director, PST. (Refer to FC 750, "Communications Tapes.")

VII. Team Coordinator Responsibilities

- A. The Coordinator, PST, will maintain the current schedule for team members and will work in conjunction with the Director, PST, to assign appropriate team personnel to respond when activated.
- B. The Coordinator, PST, will be responsible for the administration of team activities, reviewing and maintaining forms, and evaluating PST interventions.

VIII. PST Members' Responsibilities

- A. PST members will conduct themselves in a professional manner, maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of the individual(s) seeking support. They will recognize that utilization of the PST services is voluntary.
- B. When arriving to the scene of an incident, PST members will immediately contact the SRO and evaluate the situation to determine if resources assigned by the Team Coordinator are adequate.
- C. In those situations where the department psychologist is responding to the scene, PST activity will occur under the psychologist's direction.
- D. Team members will offer and provide support/assistance according to approved training and

within role definition of the PST. This will include attention to alternative action in cases where confidentially issues arise or when affected personnel request non-team resources.

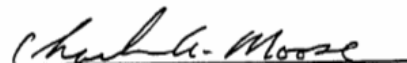
- E. In situations involving the possibility of administrative or criminal sanction, the Director, SMD, and/or other police psychologists will have full responsibility for responding to employees directly involved. PST may be activated to assist other individuals affected by the situation.
- F. PST will not interfere nor assist in any investigatory process. PST and investigators/ SROs will work cooperatively to protect the integrity of crime scenes as well as to ensure that PST services are available to affected personnel.
- G. PST will not interfere with the activities of bargaining unit representatives who are serving as representatives to the employee, but will be readily available to provide appropriate assistance upon their request. The Director, PST, in appropriate and relevant circumstances, may consult with the affected bargaining unit steward and department command staff to determine the appropriate PST response.
- H. Depending on the nature of the event and the wishes of involved personnel, team members may offer group or individual assistance.

IX. Director, PST, Responsibilities

The Director, PST, will:

1. Maintain an on-call psychologist list at ECC, and work in conjunction with the PST Coordinator when approving PST activation.
2. Determine the need for large-scale debriefing(s).
3. Maintain team records in a confidential file at SMD.
4. Periodically review policy and procedures with PST members.
5. Periodically review individual team members' effectiveness and dedication.

X. Proponent Unit: Stress Management Division



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